Advent Devotional December 9, 2026

Scripture

Psalm 50

The mighty one, God the Lord,
speaks and summons the earth
from the rising of the sun to its setting.
2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,
God shines forth.

3 Our God comes and does not keep silent;
before him is a devouring fire
and a mighty tempest all around him.
4 He calls to the heavens above
and to the earth, that he may judge his people:
5 "Gather to me my faithful ones,
who made a covenant with me by sacrifice!"
6 The heavens declare his righteousness,
for God himself is judge. Selah

7 "Hear, O my people, and I will speak,
O Israel, I will testify against you.
I am God, your God.
8 Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you;
your burnt offerings are continually before me.
9 I will not accept a bull from your house
or goats from your folds.
10 For every wild animal of the forest is mine,
the cattle on a thousand hills.
11 I know all the birds of the air,
and all that moves in the field is mine.

12 "If I were hungry, I would not tell you,
for the world and all that is in it is mine.
13 Do I eat the flesh of bulls
or drink the blood of goats?
14 Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving,
and pay your vows to the Most High.
15 Call on me in the day of trouble;
I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me."

16 But to the wicked God says,
"What right have you to recite my statutes
or take my covenant on your lips?
17 For you hate discipline,
and you cast my words behind you.
18 You make friends with a thief when you see one,
and you keep company with adulterers.

19 You give your mouth free rein for evil,
and your tongue frames deceit.
20 You sit and speak against your kin;
you slander your own mother's child.
21 These things you have done, and I have been silent;
you thought that I was one just like yourself.
But now I rebuke you and lay the charge before you.

22 Mark this, then, you who forget God,
or I will tear you apart, and there will be no one to deliver.
23 Those who bring thanksgiving as their sacrifice honor me;
to those who go the right way,
I will show the salvation of God."

Devotion

Elizabeth Baisley, Welcome Center and Events Manager

Today we are a scant two weeks from Christmas, and chances are good that we've launched our frail, forgetful selves at top speed toward a small mountain of holiday-related tasks and checklists. Perspective flees as we chase holiday gifts and plan perfect celebrations and travel.

But surely this is not the only time of year when we lose sight of the presence and activity of the living God in the world. Throughout the years of our lives, as frustrations and disappointments mount, as we stagger under the weight of unmet expectations, missed deadlines, and bad news, we make friends with thieves and deceive ourselves and others with the idea that we're in control.

Psalm 50 reminds us to be mindful of and listen for the invitation of our ever-faithful God (v. 15, "Call on me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me") and to bring thanksgiving to lay at his feet, for our God—not our will, not our willingness to throw money or energy at anything we face—is our salvation.

Prayer

I am thankful before You, living and enduring King, for you have mercifully restored my soul within me. Great is Your faithfulness.[1] Grant that on this day I may recollect and remember that it is You who speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting, You whom I encounter as I meet Your children, and You who sends Your Son, our salvation, among us, in whose name I pray.

[1] The prayer's first sentence is a morning blessing from an English translation of *Modeh Ani*. Source: "*Siddur Edot HaMizrach*, Preparatory Prayers, *Modeh Ani* 3," Sefaria, Sefaria Community Translation, sefaria.org.